June – 2017

A Critical Study of the Multiple Conflicts in the Selected Novels of Naguib Mahfouz

Synopsis

Submitted to

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For the registration of degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English

Under

Faculty of Arts

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❖ Introduction:

Naguib Mahfouz is the only Nobel laureate from Arab World. He is one of the most popular writers in modem Arabic literature. He was born in Egypt in 1911; and started his literary career at the age of 17. He has to his credit more than thirty novels and a dozen of short story collections. As a writer, he is concerned with the socio-economic- political and cultural affairs of the modern Arab world. He was born in the middle class, and hence, middle class life is the forefront of his creative vision.

The conflict in Mahfouz's writing is, in many ways, a predominant aspect. However, this conflict can be divided into four main interrelated heads: i) The spiritual conflict in Yasin Ahmed Abd al-Gawad's, i) The Psychological conflict mostly in the whole volumes of the ***Trilogy.*** iii) The Socio-political conflict in the two main political and social trends: socialism and Muslim brotherhood, and iv) The economic conflict in Kamal Ahmad Abd al-Gawad's, the protagonist and many other minor characters.

As a keen writer of Arabic and of Egyptian nationality, Naguib Mahfouz initially wrote ***The Cairo Trilogy,*** published in 1957 in Arabic in the light of contemporary socio-eco-political and religious life, it is Mahfouz's magnification epic of social Egypt which, for the first time was

written in one volume containing about 1300 pages. Mahfouz belongs to tradition of English novelist, Sir Walter Scott, and critics rank him with Charles Dickens. He was awarded Noble Prize for literature in 1988 and most of his works have been translated into English.

❖ The Title of the Research Study:

The topic of the present study is related to Arabian literature particularly to Egyptian literary canon. A special emphasis will be placed on the theme of conflict in the selected novels of Naguib Mahfouz. He has contributed to the world literature in general and Arab literature in particular, as a novelist, fiction writer, movie script writer and a playwright. Present study limits itself to his selected novels only.

Thus the title is: "**Multiple Conflicts in the Selected Novels of Naguib Mahfouz**".

❖ The Hypothesis and Present Need for the Research:

A good number of research investigations have been made on the different aspects of Arabian literature. So far as Egypt is concerned, much attention is still required. There is less criticism found from the perspective of multiple conflicts. Keeping this in mind the researcher comes to the hypothesis that diverse ideological concepts prevalent in Egyptian society is the root cause of the multiple conflicts. The difference between ideology and practice is found on greater extent. Life of the first half of twentieth century Egyptian man is full of painful events. Mahfouz has depicted it perfectly. Attention has been paid on three aspects of life: Psychological, Religious or spiritual and Socio-Political aspects.

❖ Aims & objectives:

Literature is the intellectual mirror that reflects human moods toward Nature, society and life. Because of that, it becomes so valuable that a researcher gets a chance to participate in intellectual quest in the writings of eminent writers like Naguib Mahfouz.

The purpose of the present study are—

1. To widen the conception of European readers about the reality and the nature of Arabic literature, particularly novel.
2. To find out the reasons of psychological conflict.
3. To find out the religious or spiritual conflict.
4. To trace the cause and effects of socio-political conflict and suggest remedy over it.

The research will focus on Naguib Mahfouz's literature showing readers how he depicts the psychological, religious or spiritual and socio- political aspects of real life in his novels. This work is hopefully expected to be a useful literary guide for Arabic students, in particular, the Yemeni ones who are interested in Arabic Literature.

❖ Nature & Scope of the Study: The Conceptual Framework:

The study throws light on multiplicity of conflicts in the lives of the Egyptians. These are: Psychological, Religious or Spiritual and Socio-economic conflicts which are the three indispensible walks of human life. These are the three universal phenomenon to bring universal touch to the study. It can be applied on international level to any text.

The novels of Naguib Mahfouz aptly throw light on these universal themes and demands attention on global level. Of course, his novels deal with other themes like New Historicism, Multiculturalism, Marxism and

Feminism, socialism, and Homosexuality. Set in heavily populated urban society of Cairo, his novels create a vast platform for further research different perspectives.

❖ The Research Design and Methodology:

The tentative research design i.e. general chapter scheme of the research study is as follows:

(1) Chapter I : Introduction

(2) Chapter II : Psychological Conflict

(3) Chapter III : Religious Conflict

(4) Chapter IV : Socio-Political Conflict

(5) Chapter V : Conclusion

Bibliography

The research intends to follow descriptive, exploratory, interpretative and analytical methods supported by inductive and deductive modes of thinking and critical opinions of the critics. The procedure adopted in the content analysis and description is of both intra-textual and inter-textual nature. By following the method of close textual comments, this study investigates the types of world-view the individual writer projected in his novels.

Since the topic is related to literature, particularly the novels, it reflects the society, its members and tradition. The novels of Naguib Mafouz are no exception to it. Selected novels will be critically evaluated, interpreted and analyzed with critical opinion of the early research studies.

However, this work will be inspired by different sources in English and Arabic that the researcher would collect from libraries in India, especially, those of Edward W. Said's *Reflection of Exile*, and Rasheed El-

Elnany's *The Pursuit of Meaning*, written in English. By producing this work, the researcher hopes to introduce brilliant insights about a unique literary 'Mahfouzean' mentality, inspired with the civilization of ancient Egypt. In addition to that, the, inherent reason beyond the paper is to provide a literary contribution to develop the literary analysis in Yemen and particularly in Dhamar University.

❖ Literature Review:

It is an interesting fact that few writers and critics have dealt with the various conflicts in Arabic literature. There are number of books written on Naguib Mahfouz in Arabic. Literature in English is lacking due to translation limitations. The researcher will utilize both Arabic and English books.

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